

MINUTES ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL

Greenville, NC
February 27, 2003

The Greenville City Council met in a regular meeting on the above date at 6:00 PM in the City Council Chambers, third floor of the Municipal Building, with Mayor Pro-Tem Miller presiding. The meeting was called to order, and the following were present.

Mayor Pro-Tem Ric Miller
Council Member Ray Craft
Council Member Pat Dunn
Council Member Rose H. Glover
Council Member Chip Little
Marvin W. Davis, City Manager
Wanda T. Elks, City Clerk
David A. Holec, City Attorney

The following were absent: Mayor Robert D. Parrott
Council Member Mildred A. Council

Mayor Pro-Tem Miller explained that this is the first information workshop to discuss the City Council priorities that were established at the February 1 planning session.

Council Member Glover expressed that the goal is to come up with some crime prevention efforts. Cities are going back to community policing.

Council Member Little explained that he wanted benchmarks. He stated that he felt the Council should set policy on how they wanted things to go and how to measure them and then to leave it to the Police Department to implement those policies.

Mayor Pro-Tem Miller stated that the Council needs to be more involved in discussions of the policies that are to be established.

Council Member Dunn felt that the City has a professional staff. They need to tell her what the department thinks they need to do the job effectively.

Council Member Glover stated that they need to look at what has and hasn't work and fix whatever needs to be fixed.

Chief of Police Joe Simonowich distributed to the Council strategies of the Greenville Police Department for the upcoming year.

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STRATEGIES OF THE GREENVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

In summary, please find below strategies of the Greenville Police Department for the coming year and beyond. The Department has spent the last year reviewing trends and seeking input from citizens in an effort to concentrate efforts on addressing quality of life issues. The Department began a strategic planning effort last summer that is designed to assist the Department in taking a more proactive approach.

The Department's strategies in the coming year address three critical areas:

- CRIME PREVENTION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
- DRUG TRADE INTERDICTION
- ENHANCED USE OF DATA AND TECHNOLOGY

CRIME PREVENTION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The Greenville Police Department currently employs one full-time crime prevention officer. In the last year, patrol officers have been engaged in attending community meetings in their assigned districts. Thus far, the scope of their participation has been limited to problem/concern identification. The Department plans to expand this program to include crime prevention education and programs.

The Department's strategies to address crime prevention efforts involve

- Crime Prevention Officer
- Prolonged district assignments in patrol
- Increased patrol interaction with community
- Problem solving unit
- Media campaign efforts and public information
- Increased emphasis on fraud and forgery

Crime Prevention Officer – The Police Department has requested an additional officer to work on crime prevention. This officer will work primarily with the program with patrol officers and community and neighborhood meetings. This officer will work with the patrol officers in problem solving and crime prevention education.

Prolonged District Assignments – Patrol officers are being assigned to the same district for 12-18 months in order that they can become more familiar with the residents and community problems of the neighborhoods.

Increased Patrol Interaction with Community – Patrol officers have been trained in problem solving techniques and are attending community meetings. District officers are tasked with developing action plans to address identified concerns. The Police Department has requested an additional four officers to increase the compliment of each patrol platoon. The additional officers will serve to better insure officers are assigned to cover their areas and to insure interaction time with citizens. It also will have a positive impact on response time and patrol visibility.

Problem Solving Unit – The H.I.T. Unit, assigned to the Investigations Division, addresses identified problems with surveillance and specific problem investigative assignments. The Police Department is attempting to organize a uniformed unit that will identify community problems and work directly in that area with the residents until the problem is solved or contained. This concept has been used successfully in other jurisdictions. As one example, the City of Raleigh makes use of a mobile substation when moving into an area.

Media Campaign Efforts – The Department has been working with the City's Public Information Officer to expand efforts to broadcast crime prevention information. Mailings have been, and will continue to be, made in cooperation with Greenville Utilities. An example of this type of effort would be the vehicle larceny campaign conducted this past fall.

Increased Emphasis on Fraud and Forgery – Fraud and forgery are the fastest growing crimes in Greenville. Through reorganization efforts, the Department will provide better education and awareness to area businesses in conjunction with increased enforcement.

DRUG TRADE INTERDICTION

The sale and use of illegal substances continues to be the primary root factor of most personal and property crimes in the City of Greenville. The Police Department has placed a great deal of resources in attacking this problem at a street level. The Department is making strides in expanding its effort to attack the problem from the point of entry into the community.

The Department's strategy in this area involves

- Re-establishing the Drug Task Force
- Operation Safe Neighborhoods
- Investigative Grand Jury
- Moving special operations away from Headquarters
- Street level interdiction

Re-establish the Drug Task Force – The Chief of Police has initiated discussions to re-establish the Drug Task Force. He has received written commitments from the Pitt County District Attorney and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation to commit manpower to the Task Force. The Task Force will be able to better address the larger drug dealers who bring illegal substances into the community. The DEA is also considering assigning two agents to the Greenville area.

Operation Safe Neighborhoods – The Greenville Police Department is cooperating with the ATF in partnership with the District Attorney to bring Operation Safe Neighborhoods to our community. Through a collaborative grant, the District Attorney has been able to assign an assistant to focus solely on our most violent offenders using firearms in their criminal activities. The program has achieved great success in Raleigh, Greensboro, and Charlotte. In Pitt/Greenville, the program has already resulted in a number of federal convictions for some of our most dangerous offenders. This program has and will continue to require substantial effort and resources from the Greenville Police Department.

Investigative Grand Jury – The Police Department plans to begin discussions with the District Attorney to reinstitute the Investigative Grand Jury. This grand jury will be helpful in the targeting and prosecuting of large drug dealers and criminal enterprises. This initiative will require cooperation of the court system.

Moving Special Operations Away from Headquarters – The Police Department is in the process of locating an independent site for the Special Investigations Unit and Drug Task Force. Investigative efforts have been hampered with their operations being housed at Police Headquarters. The external, single location will allow for better operations in combination with unity for all of the vice operations.

Street Level Interdiction – The Department will continue to use Tactical Patrol and shift officers to provide street level interdiction in the drug trade, while Special Investigations and the Task Force focus on the trafficking level.

ENHANCED USE OF DATA AND TECHNOLOGY

The Greenville Police Department has made great strides in the use of technology to make operations more efficient and effective. However, the Department still does not have acceptable methods to provide line level officers with up-to-the-minute and useful data that can benefit their day-to-day activities.

The Department's strategies in this area involve

- IT position assigned to the Police Department
- Integration of GIS system into daily activities
- Wireless communication

IT Position Assigned to the Police Department – Through reorganization, the Police Department and IT Department were able to dedicate a position within the existing work force that would be assigned to work with computer technology with the Police Department. The Department has considerable technology that is not being used to its fullest potential.

Integration of GIS System into Daily Activities – With the assistance of the IT position, the Department plans to make full use of GIS data at the line level. Street officers and supervisors will have access to up-to-the-minute crime/activity analysis. Currently, information filters down that is 24-72 hours old. The system will provide for officers to be more accountable for daily activities.

Wireless Communications – The Police Department continues to find methods to improve efficiency and effectiveness through use of wireless communications. These methods provide officers with up-to-the-minute information, provide for officer safety, and make them more accessible to the community.

In conclusion, this is a summary of many activities that we will be undertaking to protect and serve the city.

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Chief Simonowich described each of the strategies listed above. He stated that as far as prolonged district assignments in patrol, the department is changing that from one year to 18 months. Each district currently has four officers.

Council Member Glover stated that she would like to see what such cities as Lumberton and Raleigh are doing with community policing.

Chief Simonowich stated that Raleigh uses a motor home for a substation so that they can take it from neighborhood to neighborhood.

Council Member Glover expressed that substations need to be established in the areas where the most crime is.

Staff was asked to provide to the Council a map showing where the crime is taking place.

City Manager Davis stated that the City would have the capability to do that, hopefully, within a year.

Chief of Police Simonowich stated that the Police Department and the Pitt County Sheriff's Department are trying to get with the District Attorney to hire an Assistant District Attorney to help reduce gun violence.

Council Member Dunn stated that some of the strategies that have been outlined will take money. The Council is not prepared to say what is good or bad. She suggested that the Council put this information in a special folder and when funds are low, the Council can pull it out to see where their dollars need to go.

Council Member Little stated that this is a good start to crime eradication. When it gets to budget time, it will be what policy the City wants to get into.

Chief Simonowich stated that this isn't all the Police Department does. They have a lot of other problems that will not be addressed by these strategies.

Council Member Craft asked if the Council can be updated on how this is progressing.

Council Member Glover expressed that the Police Department should consider substations because they work.

Chief Simonowich stated that with the substation in West Greenville, it was a community resource center and the substation was run by volunteers from the neighborhood in order to keep it open. It became difficult to find people who wanted to volunteer. Chief Simonowich further stated that at the present time, the car is the police officer's office. He has his computer there so he can function in the neighborhood he/she is assigned to as opposed to having to go to headquarters to prepare reports, etc.

City Manager Davis stated that staff can identify the pros and cons of substations and put costs with it.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wanda T. Elks, CMC
City Clerk